

IN TOUCH JULY/AUGUST 2026

Dear All

As we head into the summer months and a well earned break I hope you will enjoy the opportunity to relax, and recharge your energies. This is also a reminder that membership renewals are now due, and we encourage you to renew promptly to ensure you can continue enjoying all that U3A has to offer. Details of the renewal process can be found on our website.

I wish you all a happy, and healthy summer, and I look forward to seeing you again when our full programme resumes in September.

*Libby Hague-Holmes
Chairman*

u3a

Shaftesbury and Gillingham

Forthcoming Events

**TALKS AT THE
CHARLTON
REMEMBRANCE HALL**

2nd July

Steve Herra

The Mysterious Disappearance
of the Irish Crown Jewels

3rd September

David Boag

Nature's Garden

In Touch is published by Shaftesbury
& Gillingham u3a

Registered Charity No 11078452

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Copies of this newsletter can be
found on our website:

<https://sgu3a.u3asite.uk>

Next u3a Talks

Monthly open meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at The New Remembrance Hall, Charlton, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 0PL - opening at 10.00am for 10.30am start. A small charge of £2 per person is made, to cover the cost of speakers and refreshments.

Open meetings provide an opportunity to have a coffee, socialise and to enjoy presentations from invited speakers. Non-members are welcome to attend one open meeting, free of charge, to sample what is on offer.

Details of speakers for the coming year can be found on our website; the next two are shown below.

Steve Herra

The Mysterious Disappearance of the Irish Crown Jewels

What were the Crown Jewels referred to by the Irish locals? Why was the safe kept in the library rather than the strongroom? When waking up after an alcoholic slumber, what did Arthur Vickers find wrapped around his neck? Who left the Crown Jewels on Arthur Vickers desk? Who found the front door and strongroom door open? What was the reward to recover the jewels? Which famous author offered his help in solving the case? Who was the famous brother of Francis Shackleton? What happened to the files in Scotland Yard? What did the King say when presented with the secret report?

Steve is a third generation of Cunard seafarers, his last ship was QE2 where he was one of the Pursers, and on leaving Cunard he served in the Royal Naval Reserve. During the past years he has conducted tours of both Cunard and P&O ships when they are in Southampton, but sadly when the pandemic struck these ceased. He has been delivering talks to U3A, Probus, WI and many local history groups for the last nine years.

David Boag

Nature's Garden

Nature owns everything, even your garden! Leave your garden unattended for a couple of months and very quickly you discover nature is taking over. Even in a well cared for garden, wildlife abounds. My camera explores every area of the garden from the garden shed to the little pond and finds so much colourful, unexpected and sometimes unwanted wildlife. Surprises wait in the shed where birds may nest and spiders hide – tiny flowers we call weeds are so beautiful when looked at in close-up. Of course at night the garden becomes a secret playground for nature; badgers, bats, owls and hedgehogs -- So who's garden is it? It could be yours.

David is a wildlife photographer and author, teaches photography to both degree and wildlife illustration students. He has led African wildlife safari trips and been a speaker on cruise ships, as well as having spoken at major conferences for organisations such as the National Trust, the RSPB, British Trust for Ornithology and the Royal Photographic Society.

Welcome, New Members

Alison Innes-Farquhar
Fenella Perriman
Jane Shayler

Group News

Shared Interests

Abbotsbury Sub Tropical Gardens
Butlers Way Abbotsbury Weymouth DT3 4LA
Visit on Tuesday 7th July

With over 30 acres of gardens set less than a mile from the sea, and with over 6000 plant species, you can see what a wonderful garden this is by visiting their website [abbotsburygardens.co.uk/visiting us](http://abbotsburygardens.co.uk/visiting-us)

Admission is £15.00 (There is free entry with some cards. Please look at the website for details). There are plants for sale, a gift shop and a café for coffee and light lunches.

We strongly encourage ride-sharing, with a small contribution towards the fuel costs. Please let us know if you plan on coming, and whether you need a lift or can offer one.

For more details contact me by email jennifer@farmadmin.co.uk.

Jennifer Day

Literature

We're coming to the end of our study of Shakespeare's first play, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and have traced the man's early career, looking at his collaboration with some of the great names of Elizabethan drama. We've learned some more about the playhouses of the time. Next, we'll follow him through the great years and finish with his last sole-authored play, *The Tempest*, on the way looking at how the playhouses changed further and how he used music in his work for the indoor theatres. So much still to do!



Peter Rolfe

BSO Concerts

I will be taking bookings for our 28th October concert, titled *Eastern Odyssey*, towards the end of August. If anyone is interested in joining this group please use the link on the website, with no commitment to join all the concert visits. The ticket price is held at the same price as last year, and the 30% discount represents very good value to hear an orchestra of this calibre live; we have secured very good seats. I look forward to hearing from you.

Jennifer Day

Shared Interests

Eleven members enjoyed our visit to John Boyd Textiles



in Castle Cary. Our tour guide, Ness, began by telling us about the almost 200 year history of the company,



which is now one of only two worldwide producing horse-hair fabric, from tails imported from China. We

then went into the room where the warp for the fabric is created using cotton, linen or silk. This gave us our first look at the remarkable machinery that not only survives in full working order but continues to turn out the highest quality fabric. Next stop was the dye department, where Ness described the complicated process necessary to ensure uniform colour and durability. Then it was into the building where the looms are housed, and where we saw fabric in some of the over 200 patterns available slowly emerging, in a process that simply can't be hurried. Of particular note was the device, actually invented at the mill, to separate out just one single hair and feed it into the weft on the loom. Upstairs we were able to talk to some workers at various tasks such as cutting patterns and teasing out horse tails. Ness was an excellent tour guide, answering our many questions, and we all came away very impressed by this extraordinary living relic of the industrial revolution.

Barbara Hurst

Quizzers

We are looking for someone to administer the Quizzers group as I will be moving away shortly. It's very easy and just needs a little admin to book a quiz and publicise it to members of the group. Please contact me if you have any questions:

Bill McIntyre
billmc239@gmail.com

Church Visits

Andrew Oatts, the church warden for Semley Church, gave us a very good talk about how



the church building has been changed over the centuries, the killing of Yvonne Fletcher and the story about the unique statue in the churchyard. I cannot promote this group



enough; our local churches offer so much more than the occasional Sunday service and they are part of the fabric of their community. One member is planning a visit to St Thomas' church in Salisbury in the Autumn, and there may be a visit to the Church in Swallowcliff in the not-too-distant future. Join the group via the website to receive information about forthcoming visits.

Jennifer Day

Garden Interest

The Garden Interest Group enjoyed a visit to a fabulous garden in early June. The garden at Gasper Cottage, which is close to Stourhead, has a glorious mix of perennials, wildflowers and shrubs, with hardy and tender annuals. The colour mixtures are glorious.

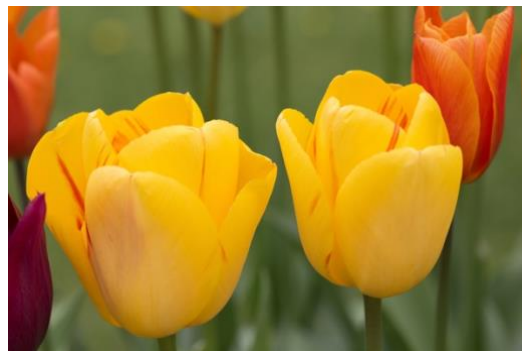


Barbara Watkinson

Photography

Our June meeting saw us reviewing pictures on the subject of 'Yellow'. We did have a bit of a panic as late the day before we were told our normal venue was unavailable. Fortunately one of the group members was able to fit us in, on the same day that more members were actually there than any previous session. As a result much was discussed, some of it was even photography related!

Our group has continued to grow to the point where we are almost at capacity. Here are a few pictures from the session, you can see the whole album via the links on the web site. https://sgu3a.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/photography-group/



Robin Collins

Really Useful Group

Several of our wonderful group of volunteers have had to step down recently. We thank them for their help since we set up the group and wish them all the very best. It leaves us sadly depleted, so we're looking for more people who can be called on whenever we need extra help. If you would be willing to help out occasionally, please let me know: barbara@pbhurst.com

Garden Interest

Forest Lodge, where the group visited on 22nd June, is spectacular and, for those of you who were unable to come along then, I urge you to try to get there on one of their NGS open days.

It was desperately hot during the visit, and I do hope that all those who came along were not feeling the after effects of being in the sun all morning. I have been asked by one of the members, who had a long chat with the head gardener, to warn you that the garden is a hot spot for ticks, so it is probably a good idea to check yourself over just to make sure one of the unwelcome blighters hasn't hitched a ride on you if you visit.

Our meeting on 13 July will be to visit two of our members' gardens in Gillingham. More details on that a little later. If you're interested please be sure to join the group, so that you will receive that information.

I have decided that we will not have a meeting in August but I am now thinking ahead to our visit to **Rosemore on 14 September.**



I already have a list of 18 people who expressed a desire to go on this trip but I would now like to firm up on numbers. **So, would you please be kind enough to confirm your place on this visit.** The journey will take just a little over 2 hours, and we will probably leave Rosemore about 3.30pm for the journey home. I plan a coach pick up/drop off in Shaftesbury and Gillingham.

We have fifty places (entry to Rosemore is free of charge) to fill, so there's plenty of space. The more people who attend, the cheaper the coach fare will be.

Barbara Watkinson

Philosophy

This week the subjects that we discussed include the changing power structure in the world and how it is likely to impact on the UK. This concentrated on China and the war in Ukraine:

China's Industrial Expansion: Will Hutton In the Observer

Fleets of ghost container ships are leaving European ports, filled with little but air as they head home to China. There, in the mega container ports of Shanghai and Shenzhen, they will reload with batteries for cars, motorbikes and cycles, electric cars, solar panels, chemicals, furniture and more, before turning back for Europe.

But the Brussels establishment and politicians across Europe are waking up to a trade relationship that borders on the abusive.

French president Emmanuel Macron describes the mounting volume of China's exports as a "steamroller", while the European Commission's strategy chief, Stéphane Séjourné, says Europe cannot be "the victim of a predatory strategy destroying our industry".

Ukraine. A Paper by the Guardian

Last week, Vladimir Putin responded with characteristic disdain to an open letter from Volodymyr Zelenskyy calling for face-to-face talks. Declining to mention Ukraine's president by name at an economic forum in St Petersburg, he said that he saw "no point" in a meeting and insisted that all Russia's war aims, including the annexation of the entirety of the eastern Donbas region, were on course to be met.

Mr Putin is "in blood stepped in so far" that agreeing to a ceasefire while those messianic goals remain unachieved may seem more politically dangerous than continuing a war which has cost an estimated 500,000 Russian lives. But as a concerted Ukrainian drone attack on St Petersburg the next day vividly illustrated, his confident assertions are increasingly belied by facts on the ground and in the air.

Chris Spencer

URGENT!

Pete Grange will step down as Membership Secretary at the AGM in November and we urgently need to find a replacement. Is that something you could take on?

We're coming up to subscription renewal time, the perfect time for you to work with Pete and learn all about this crucial role on the job.

If you think this is something you could do, please get in touch with Pete for more details:peter@thegranges.org.uk

Community News

We are thrilled to announce that two of our swim club's talented swimmers have qualified to compete in the Special Olympics this August 2026 in Birmingham. This is a fantastic achievement and a proud moment for our Club and community!

To help support their journey, we are seeking sponsorship donations to cover travel, accommodation, participation & other costs please. Every contribution, no matter how big or small, will make a meaningful difference.



"I have been trying to get to the Special Olympics for 8 years. I love to swim and it helps my confidence and makes me feel proud" - Jake

"I am excited for the competition and to be in the Olympics. I am going to do my best swimming and try really hard to make people proud." - Sam

Please consider supporting our swimmers as they represent us all, our lovely town and our county at this inspiring event.

You can sponsor them via the QR code or come along to TheWildCo Summer Party for fantastic fun!



Scan to donate

The WildCo

Summer Party

Raising money for charity and sponsorship




FREE Sunday 12th July FREE

1200-1500

Barton Hill & the Lido outdoor pool, SP7 8QA

Live music	Games
Line dancing	Raffle
Aqua Fit	Tombola
Fun swim	& more!
Swimming Teachers	

🌸 ✨ Motcombe Village Hall Open Day – Sunday 5th July 10–4 ✨ 🌸

Everyone welcome • Free entry • Refreshments served all day

Come and discover much of what our wonderful village has to offer at our Motcombe Village Hall Open Day. From 10am to 4pm the hall will be buzzing with local groups, friendly faces, activities for all ages and a chance to explore the brilliant facilities right here on our doorstep.

Whether you want to get involved in something new, meet the people behind our community groups, enjoy a cuppa with neighbours or simply have a lovely day out — this is the perfect chance.

🏠 Who You'll Meet Inside the Main Hall: Village Hall Trustees, Motcombe Village Shop, Motcombe Garden Club, u3a Genealogy Group, Motcombe Parish Council, Motcombe Women's Institute.

🧘 Who you'll meet in the Clock Hall: Kym Mitchell, yoga instructor, Paris Notley, dance and ballet instructor, Teruko Chagrin, Tai Chi instructor.

CHARITY CAR BOOT SALE

Supporting Poole &
East Dorset Branch of



- **Sunday 5th July**
- **Sunday 2nd August**
- **Sunday 6th September**

- **SELLERS 10:00AM**
- **Cars/Small Vans £6**
- **Large Vans/Trailers £10**
- **Buyers parking available £1**

**THE PLAYING FIELD – MOTCOMBE MEMORIAL HALL,
MOTCOMBE SP7 9PE**

**TOILETS AND REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE AT THE HALL
DOGS WELCOME (MUST BE KEPT ON A LEAD AT ALL TIMES)**

For further information please contact: Paul
Tel: 07538396652 Email: paul.carbooty63@gmail.com



Are you aged 65 or over? Have you experienced fraud by someone you know or trust?

We want to hear your story.

I am conducting doctoral research at the University of Leicester to understand how older adults experience and respond to fraud by people they know or trust. This research aims to move beyond simple narratives to understand the complexity of your experiences.

What's Involved

- A confidential interview lasting up to 75 minutes
- Choose between in-person (East Midlands), online via Microsoft Teams, or by email
- Share your experiences in a safe, supportive environment
- Your identity will be protected, with all identifiable information removed

Can You Take Part?

- You are aged 65 or over
- You have experienced fraud or deception by someone you know or knew (partner, family, friend, or professional)
- Any investigation into the fraud has been completed
- You can speak and understand English fluently
- You are willing to share your experience

Why Your Voice Matters



Improve understanding of how fraud affects older adults



Inform psychological theory and clinical practice



Support service development & safeguarding strategies

Interested in Participating?

Contact: Shannon Edwards

Trainee Clinical Psychologist
DClinPsy Programme · University of Leicester
se220@leicester.ac.uk

As a thank you for your time, you will receive a £20 Love2Shop voucher!

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Leicester Research Ethics Committee: 5266



GILLINGHAM RISING

— MARKET • HIGH STREET • COMMUNITY —

AT THE MEADOW

WHAT TO EXPECT



Local traders
& makers



Street food
& coffee



Family
activities



Community
stalls



Come and support local businesses and
be part of something positive for Gillingham.

Saturday 11 July • 10am–4pm • Town Meadow, Gillingham • Free Entry



Follow @GillinghamRising



Stallholder enquiries:
gillinghamrising@outlook.com

CURRENT GROUPS

Group	Date	Leader
Art Appreciation	Monday 2-3.30pm – week 2	Gil Watkinson
BSO Concerts	To be arranged	Jennifer Day
Café y galletas	Tuesday mornings weekly	Anita Adams
Canasta I	Monday pm – weeks 1 & 3	Hazel Baker
Canasta II	Wed p.m. – weeks 2 & 4	Barbara Watkinson
Canasta III	Thursday am – weeks 2 & 4	Pam Hooker
Churches/Places of Worship	To be Arranged 4 visits/year	Barbara Hurst
French for Fun 1	Tuesday/fortnightly - 10am	Ron Beard
French for Fun 2	Wednesday /fortnightly-pm	Chris Stotesbury
Garden Interest	Monday – am - week 2	Barbara Watkinson
Genealogy	Monday – pm – week 4	Liz Greenway Valerie Hencken
German Conversation	Wednesday - fortnightly-pm	Robert Light
International History	Wednesday–am week 3	Richard Sims
Italian Advanced Conversation	Tues 3.15-4.15	Alison Rigby
Italian Complete Beginners	Tues 10am–11am weekly	Alison Rigby
Italian Intermediate	Tues 2-3 weekly	Alison Rigby
Italian Intermediate Plus	Tues 11.15am–12.15am weekly	Alison Rigby
Literature	Mon-am on Zoom Weeks 1 & 3	Peter Rolfe
Lunch Club	Friday – week 4	Michael Pittman
Mahjong	Friday – 2pm weeks 2 & 4	Marion Pace
Music for Pleasure	Thursday – pm – weeks 2 & 4	Eileen Haddleton
Natural History	Wed - 10-12.30pm – week 2	Janet Fenton
Photography	Thursday 10.00-12.00 week 3	Robin Collins
Philosophy	By arrangement	Chris Spencer
Poetry & Play Reading	Thursday – pm – week 1	Janet Botterill
Reading Group	Friday 11-12pm – week 1	Colin & Anne Marsh
Really Useful Group	Anyone who would like to help	Barbara Hurst
Scrabble	Friday – am - weekly	Jill Page
Shared Interests	Varied	Barbara Hurst
Spanish Intermediate	Fortnightly, currently flexible	Maya Deyes
Spite & Malice	Thursday – 2.00pm – Week 3	Sue Walker
Table Tennis	Thursday 2.00pm - weekly	Elizabeth Lewer Chris Stotesbury
The Quizzers	By arrangement	Bill McIntyre
Theatre Visits	Matinees, 3-4 times per year	Roger Laidler
Writing for Pleasure	Mon 10.30am Weeks 2 & 4 via	Peter Rolfe